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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
7 October 1966

State Department review  
completed

NSA review completed

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7 October 1966

HIGHLIGHTS

A new political crisis is in the making in Saigon with the resignation of six more cabinet ministers. The latest resignations are by south-erners who resent a Saigon newspaper article de-fending the actions of a northern minister who resigned last week.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
Only light contact between allied and Communist forces has been reported today (Paras. 1-3). Op-eration IRVING in Binh Dinh Province has inflicted heavy enemy casualties (Para. 4). Viet Cong guer-rillas in Binh Thuan Province reportedly are plan-ning a major attack on the Phan Thiet Airfield (Paras. 5-6). Weekly South Vietnam Battle Sta-tistics (Para. 7).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
Six more cabinet ministers have submitted their resignations to Prime Minister Ky following the appearance of an inflammatory newspaper article (Paras. 1-3).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:  
The North Vietnamese Navy may be transferring its tactical command post to the Haiphong area (Paras. 1-2).

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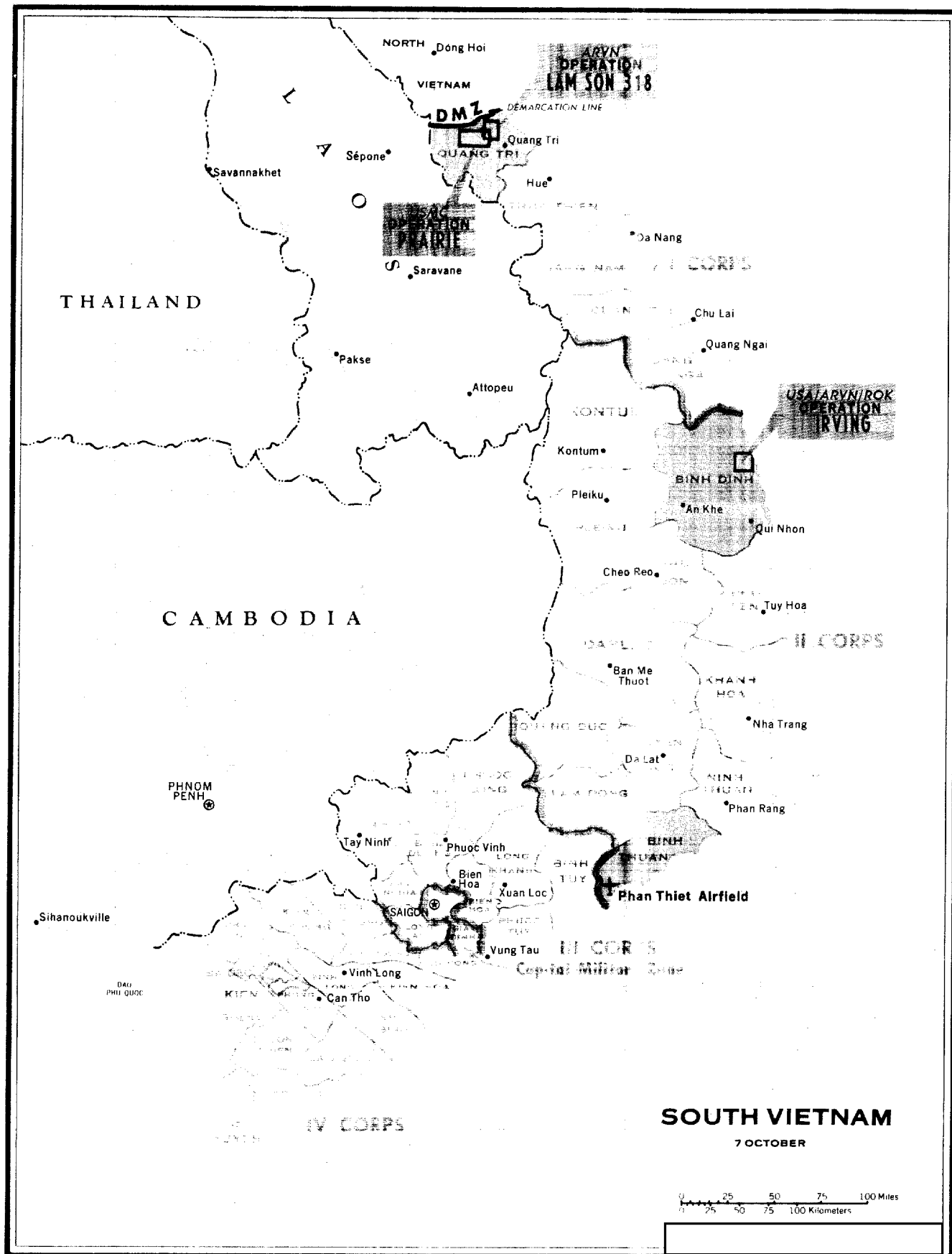
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
One of the seven major Chinese units in North Viet-nam may have completed its mission and may be re-turning to China (Paras. 1-2).

V. Communist Political Developments: The So-viet ambassador in Katmandu told a US Embassy of-ficial on 5 October that the North Vietnamese would respond "positively" in return for an unconditional cessation of US bombings (Paras. 1-2).

ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics  
1963 thru week of 25 Sept - 1 Oct 1966  
-Weapons and Personnel Losses  
-Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Only light contact was reported on 6 and 7 October after a week of heavy fighting between allied and Communist forces on two main fronts-- northern Quang Tri Province and coastal Binh Dinh Province.

2. South Vietnamese soldiers reported sporadic encounters with Communist forces in an area just south of the DMZ. These forces, participating in Operation LAM SON 318, killed ten enemy soldiers while sustaining losses of 11 wounded the afternoon of 6 October.

3. The six-battalion US Marine force conducting Operation PRAIRIE in northern Quang Tri Province has reported a total of 982 Communist troops killed since this operation began on 3 August. American casualties now total 144 killed and 616 wounded. A record number of tactical air strikes--2,101--have been flown in support of PRAIRIE which has been successfully sweeping the area immediately south of the DMZ for units of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) 324B Division.

4. Allied forces participating in Operation IRVING, which began on 1 October in the coastal area of central Binh Dinh Province, have successfully completed an encirclement maneuver forcing elements of the NVA/Viet Cong 610th Division into open fighting or surrender. Total casualty figures for this 15-battalion operation to date show a total of 1,062 Communist soldiers killed as compared with allied casualties of only 34 killed and 136 wounded. Also notable is the high number of enemy troops captured (589) and Communist suspects detained (1,119).

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Viet Cong Plan Attack on Phan Thiet Airfield

5. The Viet Cong are reportedly preparing plans for a two-battalion attack on the Phan Thiet Airfield in coastal Binh Thuan Province about 95 miles east of Saigon. Viet Cong leaders have been attempting to recruit workers at the airport in an informant network, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Viet Cong guerrillas had previously conducted a mortar attack on the airfield on 26 September.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

6. The week of 25 September - 1 October compared with the week of 18-24 September:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>	
18-24 Sep	18	0	0	
25 Sep - 1 Oct	14	0	0	
<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Harassment</u>	<u>Terrorism</u>	
18-24 Sep	1	394	18	
25 Sep - 1 Oct	1	382	33	
<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabo-tage</u>	<u>Propa-ganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
18-24 Sep	19	16	165	630
25 Sep - 1 Oct	8	26	116	579

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II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>18-24 Sep</u>	<u>25 Sep-1 Oct</u>	<u>18-24 Sep</u>	<u>25 Sep-1 Oct</u>
Killed	1,165	1,624	98	87
Wounded	-----	-----	280	268
Missing/ Captured	<u>242</u>	<u>388</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>21</u>
TOTALS	1,407	2,012	449	376

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>18-24 Sep</u>	<u>25 Sep-1 Oct</u>	<u>18-24 Sep</u>	<u>25 Sep-1 Oct</u>
Killed	142	99	8	16
Wounded	825	642	28	48
Missing/ Captured	<u>3</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	970	753	36	64

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>18-24 Sep</u>	<u>25 Sep-1 Oct</u>	<u>18-24 Sep</u>	<u>25 Sep-1 Oct</u>
Individual	269	Not	39	65
Crew-Served	<u>29</u>	<u>Reported</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	298		39	65

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Six more cabinet ministers, all sympathetic southerners, have submitted their resignations to Premier Ky. A potential cabinet crisis had just started to settle following the acceptance of the health secretary's resignation when an unfortunate article appeared in a local Vietnamese newspaper on 6 October. The article defended the actions of the health secretary, who is a northerner, and inflamed the feelings of the southern ministers, who were already irritated over the temporary detention of one of their colleagues by police director Loan.

2. The omnibus letter of resignation from the six ministers cited their concern with police state methods and Ky's failure to consult with his cabinet. Vo Long Trieu, minister of youth and probably the most influential individual in the resignation move, told a US Embassy official on 7 October that Ky suspended the offending newspaper. However, the six ministers were already scheduled to discuss the matter with Chief of State Thieu on the afternoon of 7 October and will presumably do so. Tran Van Do, the foreign affairs minister, told the US Embassy that the best solution might be a quick cabinet reshuffle if the matter is not resolved at an early date. Do believes that Ky will have no choice but to make the changes since the six cabinet members seem determined to carry through on their resignations.

3. The differences of opinion within the cabinet and between the resigning members and the government clearly reflect traditional regional animosities. However, the arrest of a cabinet-level functionary by Ky's security officers triggered the crisis and added to the hostility of southern civilian government officials toward the northern-oriented military rulers. The appearance of the article defending the health secretary in a paper which receives backing from Premier Ky has brought the situation to the point where it could spread to the Civilian-Military Council and the Constituent Assembly.

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It is possible that influential northerners close to Ky, such as General Loan, are purposely influencing the affair without Ky's foreknowledge in order to rid the cabinet of some of the southern members. Loan has been in South Korea since 3 October, [REDACTED]

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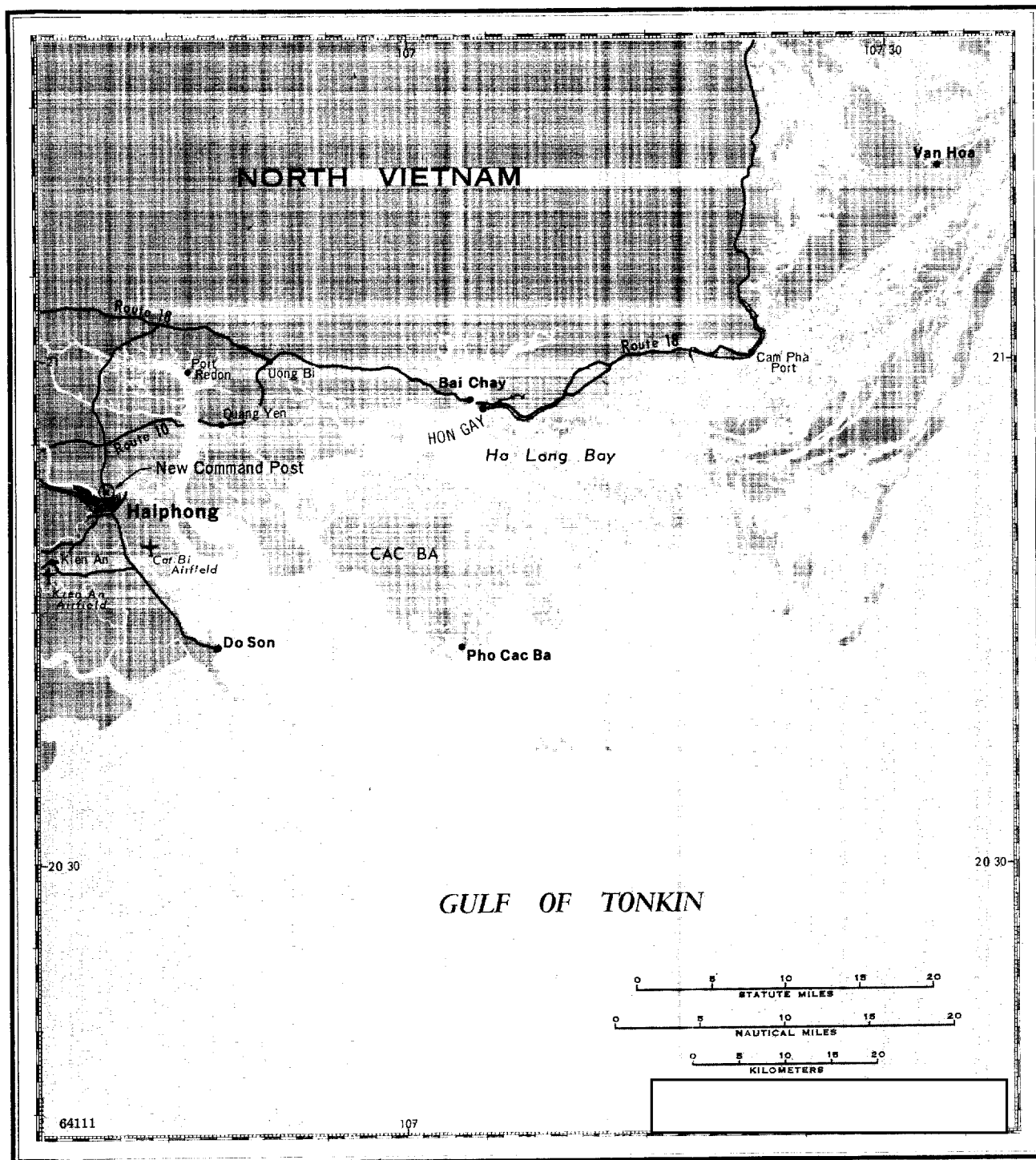
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## North Vietnamese Naval Bases



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### III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The North Vietnamese Navy may be in the process of transferring its tactical command post from the Bai Chay Naval Base to Haiphong harbor, according to information derived from communications intercepts. A recent DRV naval message reported "beginning construction on the command post at Binh Dong," probably located on the north side of the Cua Cam River opposite Haiphong.

2. North Vietnam's naval headquarters has always been located in Haiphong, but operational control of the DRV's limited fleet of patrol and motor torpedo boats has been delegated since the spring of 1965 to authorities based at Bai Chay and Pho Cac Ba. During July and August 1966 North Vietnamese naval units were repeatedly hit by US air attacks and on 14 August a major part of the fleet withdrew from the forward operating bases and took refuge in Haiphong harbor. Since that time DRV naval activity has been confined to repairing its damaged boats and providing air defense for foreign ships offloading in Haiphong and Ha Long Bay. The construction of a new command post in Haiphong may indicate a decision on the part of the DRV Navy to abandon the present operating bases and consolidate its remaining forces.

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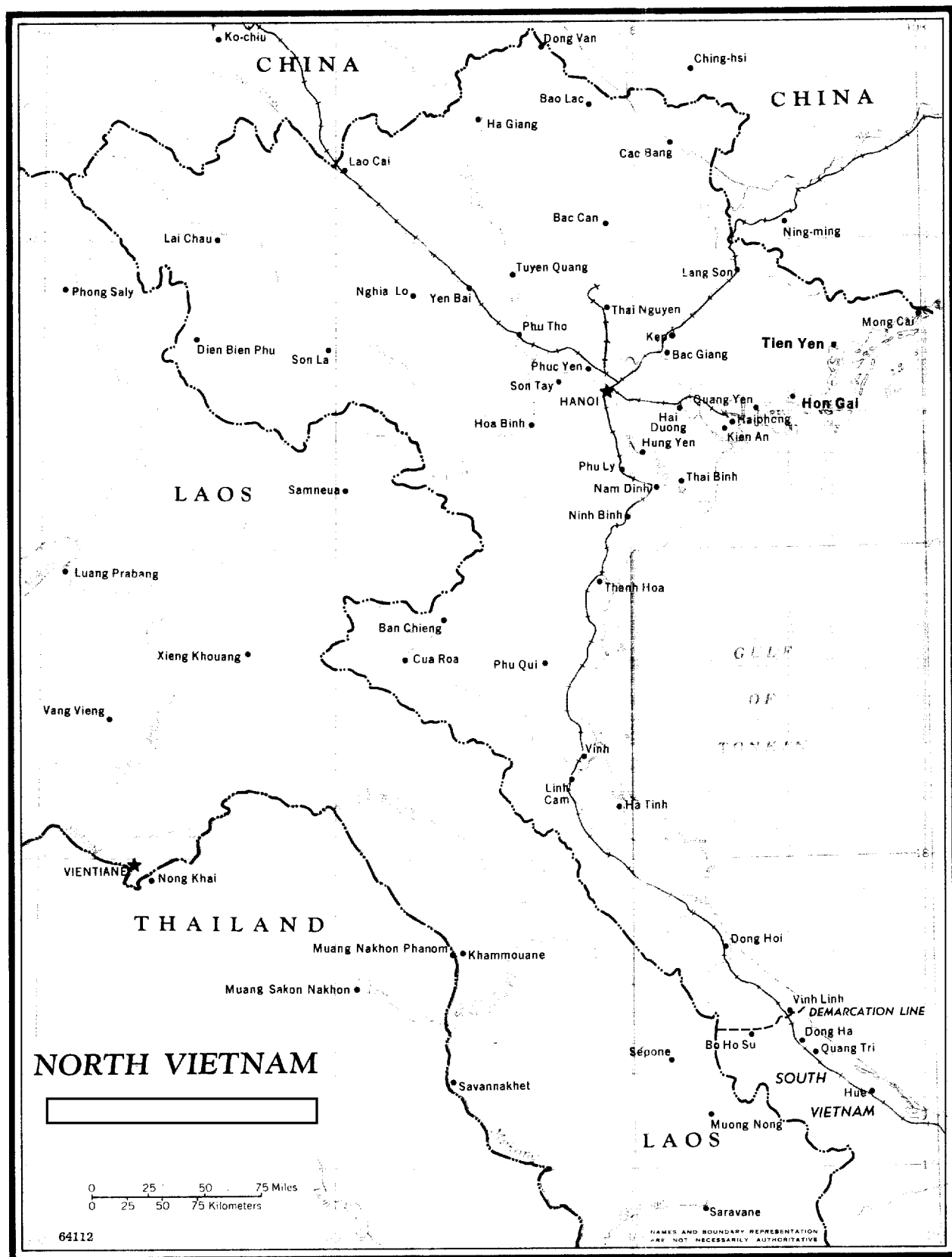
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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There are indications that one of the seven major Chinese units in North Vietnam may have completed its mission and may be returning to China. The suspect special engineer division, [redacted] located in the Hon Gai/Tien Yen area, ceased communications on one of its three primary radio links on 29 September and has not been active on the other two since 6 October. It cannot be determined yet if the radio group which it controls has been deactivated. If this is confirmed, and [redacted] continues to be silent on its primary links, it can be assumed that the radio station serving this unit has been deactivated. These are measures which have preceded the withdrawal of other Chinese units from North Vietnam.

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2. There were indications earlier this year that the activities for [redacted] were being reduced. Since May, three of its subordinate units deactivated their communications and presumably returned to China. These units have been supporting coastal defense construction projects.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. The Soviet ambassador in Katmandu, in a conversation with a US Embassy official on 5 October, claimed that the North Vietnamese would respond "positively" in return for an unconditional cessation of US bombings. This would, he asserted, "open up possibilities for political negotiations." He commented further that, although the reaction would not come immediately, it "would not be long delayed." He did not specify what kind of concession North Vietnam would be willing to make or how long the delay might be.

2. As reported this is a more forthright statement than Soviet spokesmen usually make on this subject. In the past, Soviet officials have been careful to avoid categorical assertions that Hanoi will respond to a cessation of air strikes.

Moscow Comment on British Peace Proposals

3. Moscow Radio on 6 October commented negatively on British Foreign Secretary Brown's six-point proposal on Vietnam. The Moscow broadcast stressed that the British plan merely repeated US proposals and offered nothing new or original.

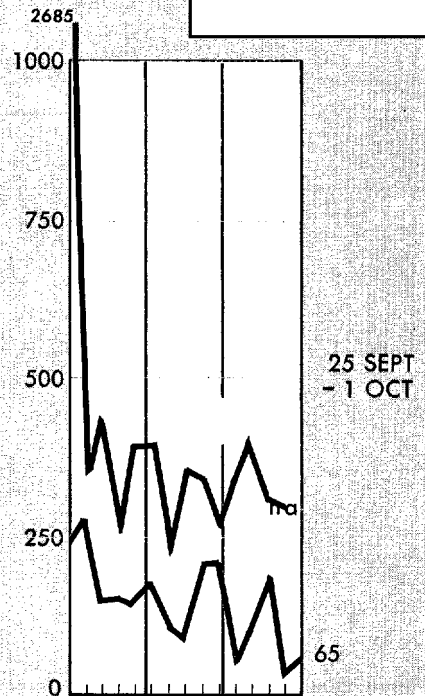
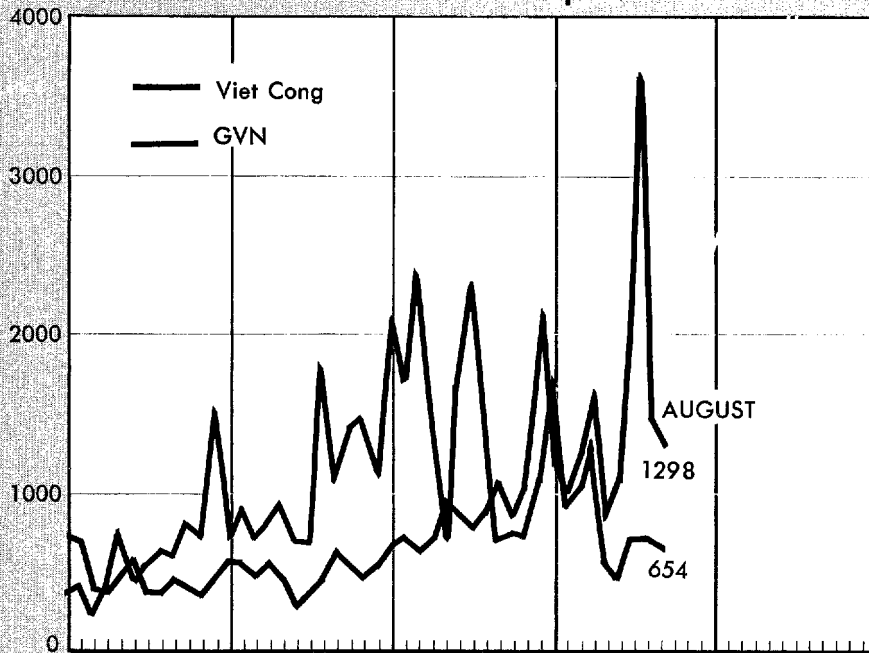
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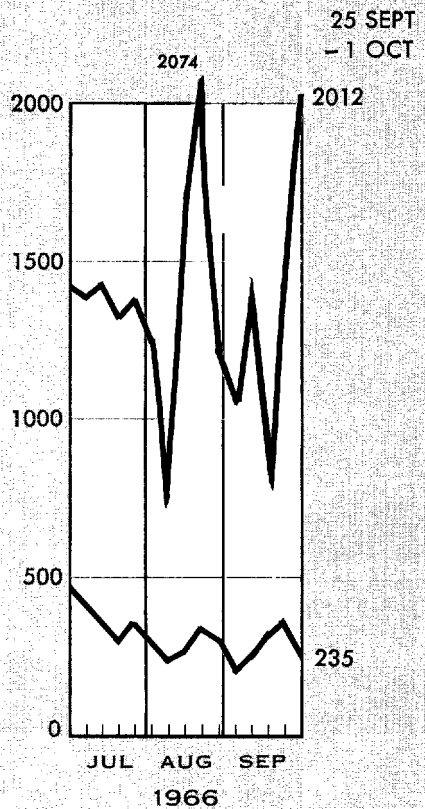
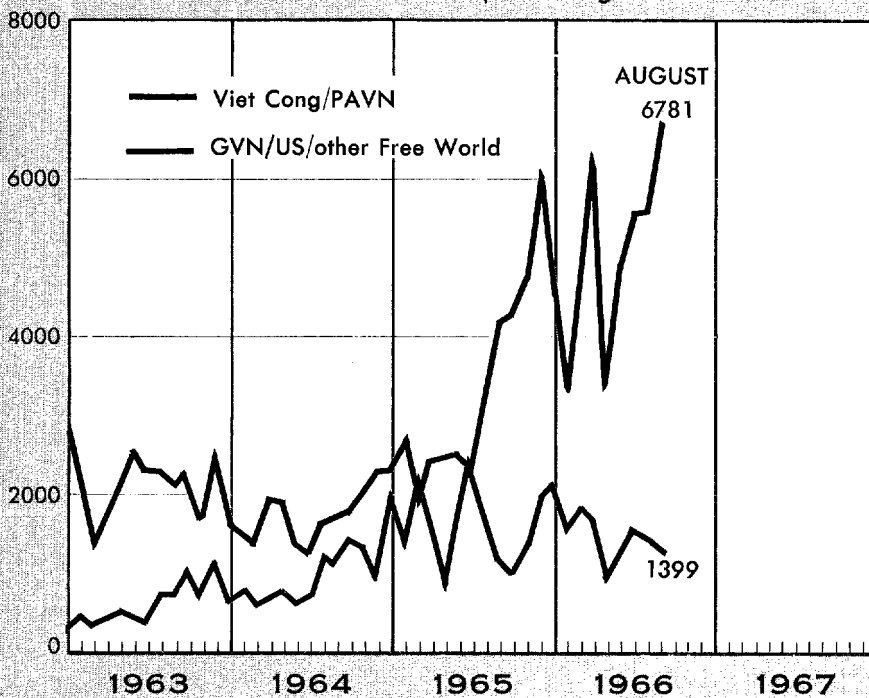
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## Weapons Losses



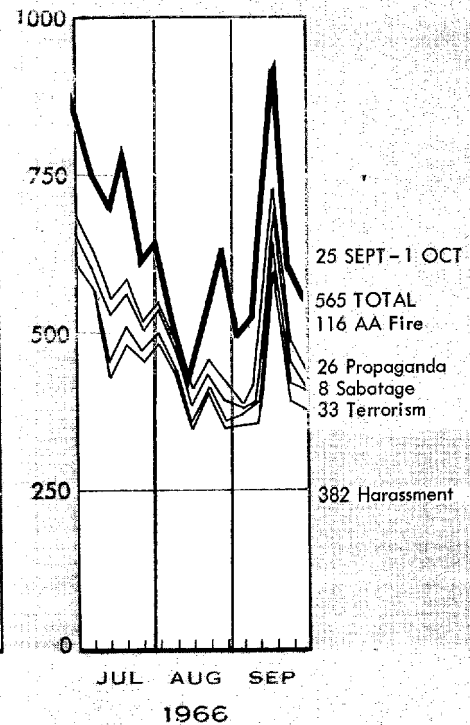
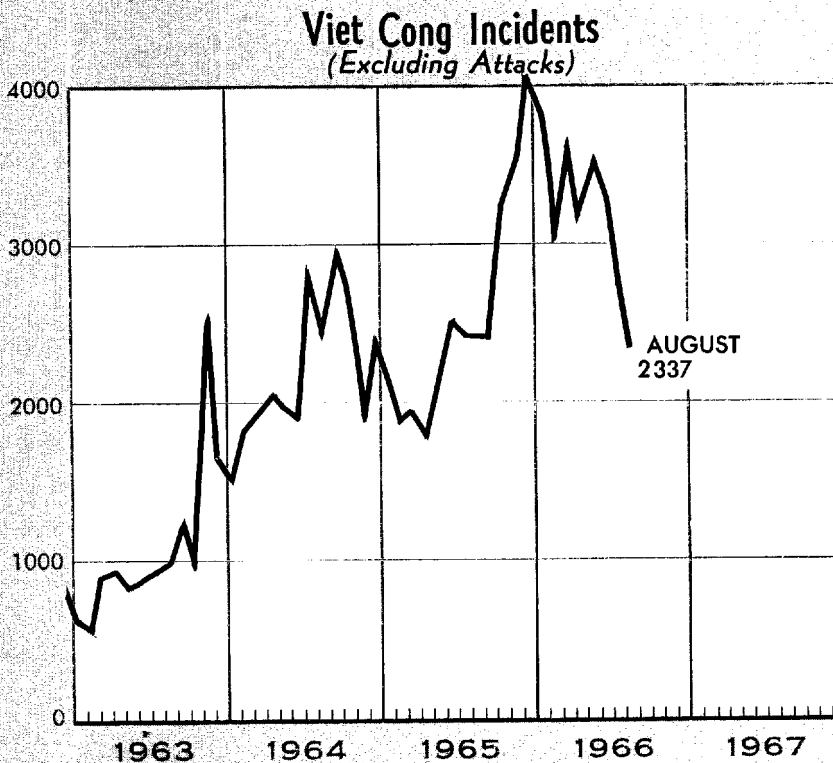
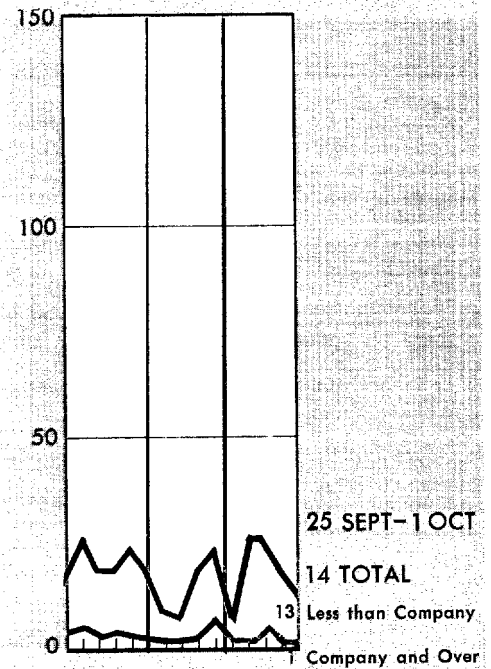
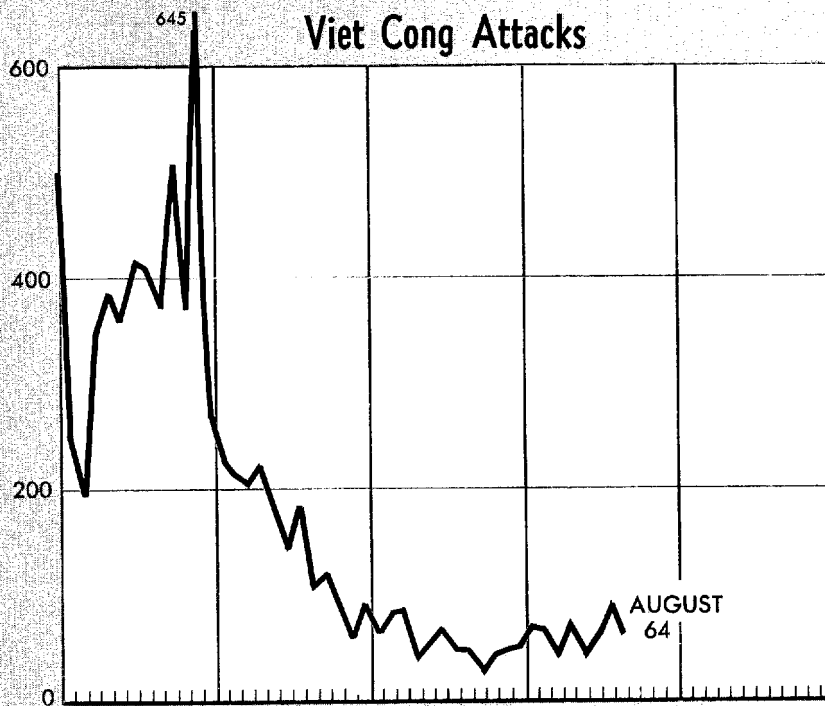
## Personnel Losses (Excluding Wounded)



US Casualties to Date: Killed 5321 Wounded 30373 Captured 75 Missing 322

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